



ARVAL
BNP PARIBAS GROUP



Future Human Leader?

INFLUENCE LABS

Blending Tech Savvy Leadership with Human Heart

23. 6. 2026

Petr BENEŠ

DIGITAL (R)EVOLUTION

INSPIRATION ·
CREATIVITY

TEAMWORK ·
INNOVATION



A white rectangular sign with a black border and a torn paper effect is taped to a glass window. The text on the sign is in a bold, sans-serif font. The background shows a bookstore interior with bookshelves and a person's hand reaching for a book.

Please note:
The post-apocalyptical
fiction section
has been moved to
Current Affairs.

Post-factual / Post-truth era

**THE WORLD KEEPS
CHANGING
EVERY DAY.**

We have lived in a VUCA world.

V

Volatility

The nature and dynamics of change — and the speed of change forces and catalysts.

U

Uncertainty

The lack of predictability, the prospects for surprise, and the sense of awareness of issues.

C

Complexity

The multiplex of forces, the confounding of issues, no cause-and-effect chain.

A

Ambiguity

The haziness of reality, the potential for misreads and mixed meanings of conditions.

This is not VUCA. This is BANI.

B

Brittle

Robust-looking systems snap without warning. No gradual decline — just sudden collapse.

A

Anxious

Every choice feels urgent. People freeze, over-react, or avoid deciding altogether.

N

Non-linear

Small inputs, unpredictable outputs. Effort $\neq$ result. Causality hides from you.

I

Incomprehensible

You can't fully understand what's happening. Neither can your stakeholders. Neither can HQ.

Challenge	Leadership Shift
Brittle: Systems break under pressure	Build resilience & slack (financial, operational, IT)
Anxious: Uncertainty breeds fear	Foster empathy & psychological safety
Nonlinear: Causes & effects are disconnected	Develop context & flexibility to adapt fast
Incomprehensible: Too much data, no clear answers	Use transparency & intuition to make decisions

From brittleness to resilience and slack

If something is brittle, it is hard, inflexible and easy to shatter. Often the result of an effort to wring the maximum profit and efficiency out of a system, brittleness means that an ecosystem, country or company could be prone to sudden and catastrophic failure. We have seen hints of this in the global financial crisis and COVID-19 supply chain disruptions.

Given that we live in an interconnected world held together by the slenderest of threads, the remedy Cascio proposes is resilience and slack. Some elements of this might include ensuring a company has the capital position and liquidity to weather unexpected disasters as well as the operational capacity and resilient IT systems to cope with events such as cyber disruptions or collapses in the supply chain.

From anxiety to empathy and mindfulness

The BANI framework acknowledges the emotional strain business leaders and their teams are facing in these times. Thinking too deeply about the next pandemic, a jobs apocalypse due to automation or the possibility of climate disaster are sure ways to increase anxiety. This, in turn, leads to a sense of helplessness and despair—which can turn a prediction of failure into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

For Cascio, empathy and mindfulness are the antidotes for anxiety. Business leaders will feel less anxious if they focus on the elements of their business and their environment which are within their control. Their teams will feel less anxious in an environment where everyone feels included, free to innovate, empowered with the right tools and embedded in an environment of psychological safety.

From nonlinearity to context and flexibility

“In a nonlinear world, cause and effect are seemingly disconnected or disproportionate,” writes Cascio. “Perhaps other systems interfere or obscure, or maybe there’s hidden hysteresis, enormous delays between visible cause and visible effect. In a nonlinear world, results of actions taken, or not taken, can end up being wildly out of balance.”

The growing effect of nearly 200 years of industrialisation on the climate is an example. Context and flexibility are ways of managing non-linearity. In our view, this might translate into an agile business model, underpinned by strategic decision-making and operations that can adjust to constant shifts in customer demand, the competitive landscape, technological changes, and the regulatory terrain.

From incomprehensibility to transparency and intuition

As business leaders, much of what we see unfold in the world seems illogical or even senseless. We can't explain events or decisions because they happened too long ago or because the cause and effect are not easy to delineate. More data often adds noise rather than signal. It is at this point that Cascio's advice is to accept that there are sometimes simply no answers that make any sense.

In our interpretation, transparency here would mean being honest with ourselves and our teams when things cannot be explained in a satisfactory manner. Intuition might mean focusing on what matters most to our business and our customers, accepting that we cannot always explain why one decision worked out better than another.

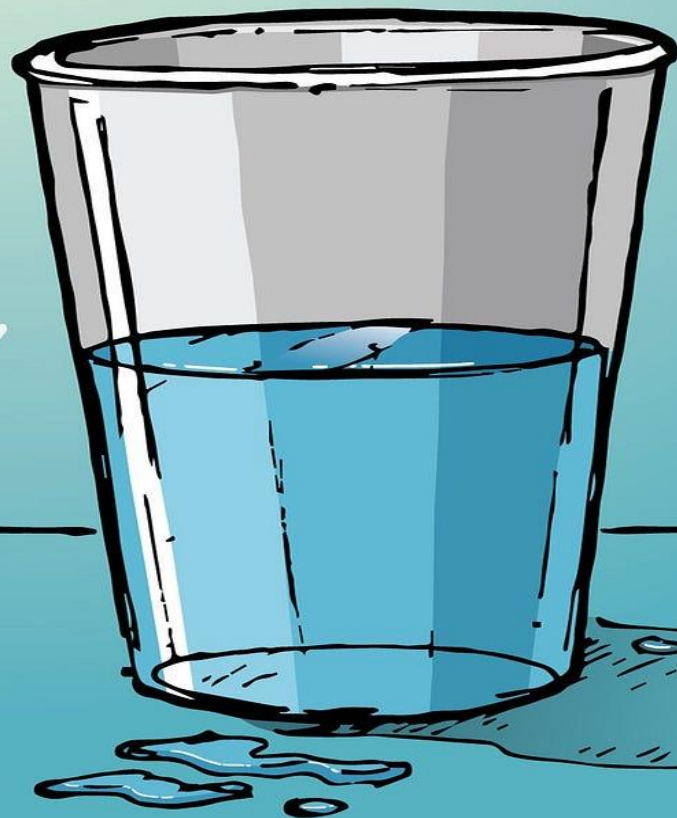
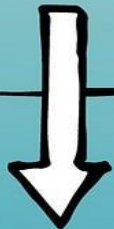
The use of AI will lead to the
commoditization of thinking.

For the last 3 months, even 4–5 hours a day exploring AI tools...

Individual personal discipline will be important **for conscious**
escapes from the comfort of AI.

AI won't
replace
a leader.
But a leader with
AI will replace
one without it.

EMPTY



FULL



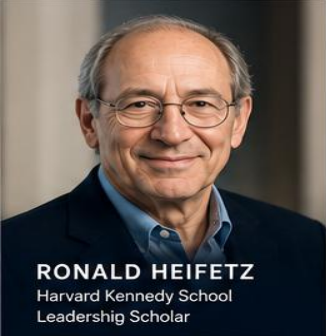
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"your value is not
what you know,
but what you share"



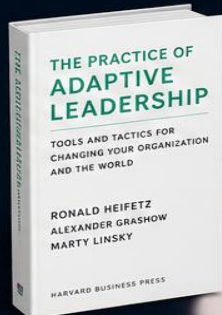
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RONALD HEIFETZ
Harvard Kennedy School
Leadership Scholar

“The single most common leadership failure is treating adaptive challenges like technical problems.”



Are You Solving the Right Problem?

Ronald Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership Framework

Different problems require different leadership.
The challenge is knowing which is which.



OF LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES ARE ADAPTIVE

They require a shift in mindset, behavior, and relationships.



THE LEADERSHIP TRAP

MANAGERS OFTEN RESPOND WITH:

- ✗ More governance
- ✗ More reporting
- ✗ More escalation
- ✗ More controls



BUT THE REAL NEED IS:

- ✓ More dialogue
- ✓ More ownership
- ✓ More alignment
- ✓ More behavior change



TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

- ✓ Expert knows
- ✓ Best practice exists
- ✓ Process fixes it
- ✓ Implementation is key

EXAMPLES IN ARVAL

-  New reporting tool
-  Standardization of processes
-  Harmonization of KPI
-  System implementation



ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

- ⚠ No agreement on problem
- ⚠ People must change behavior
- ⚠ Identity and power are involved
- ⚠ No expert can solve it alone
- ⚠ Requires learning, dialogue and experimentation

EXAMPLES IN ARVAL

-  Cross-border collaboration
-  Building trust across teams and countries
-  Changing the way managers work
-  Adoption of the SSC model
-  Breaking silos and ways of working



The hardest part of transformation is rarely the process.
It is the people.



WE CARE



WE DARE



WE DELIVER



WE SIMPLIFY



ARVAL
BNP PARIBAS GROUP

“

"Don't fight chaos,
dance with it."

FOREWORD BY DAN SULLIVAN

DANCING WITH CHAOS



3 STEPS TO BREAK FREE FROM COMPLEXITY,
MOVE TOWARD YOUR GOALS FASTER,
AND LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

CARLY ABRAMOWITZ

Influence Labs

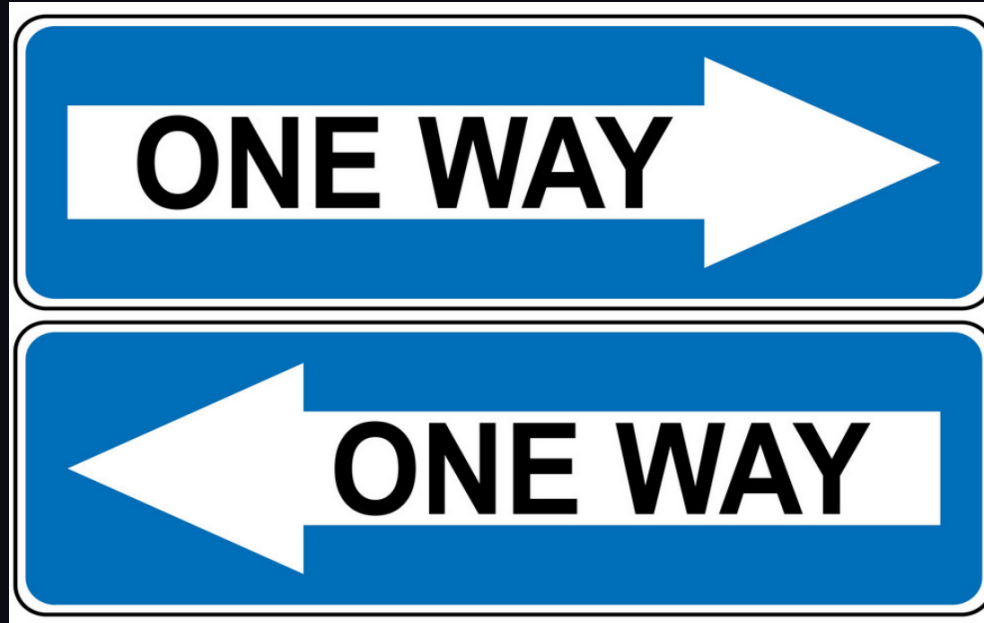
NO FORMAL AUTHORITY

MATRIX REALITY

REAL TOOLS · REAL
CASES

The moment your title stops being enough —
that's when leadership actually starts.

EVENT = OUTCOME



“

**Responsibility is the ability to
choose our response to any
circumstance or condition.**

— *Stephen Covey*

We either build barriers... or we expand horizons.

BARRIERS

that's how it's always done here...
Give me a break with all the new
stuff...
there's no other way...

HORIZONS

Hmm, what else...?
You can use this for that...
Hey, I was thinking...

What do you have impact & influence on?



The diagram consists of three overlapping circles arranged horizontally. The leftmost circle is dark green with a green outline and contains the text 'I DECIDE, CONTROL, BEHAVE' in green. The middle circle is dark brown with a brown outline and contains the text 'I CAN INFLUENCE' in brown. The rightmost circle is dark purple with a purple outline and contains the text 'I CANNOT INFLUENCE' in purple. The circles overlap in the center, creating a shared area.

I DECIDE, CONTROL, BEHAVE

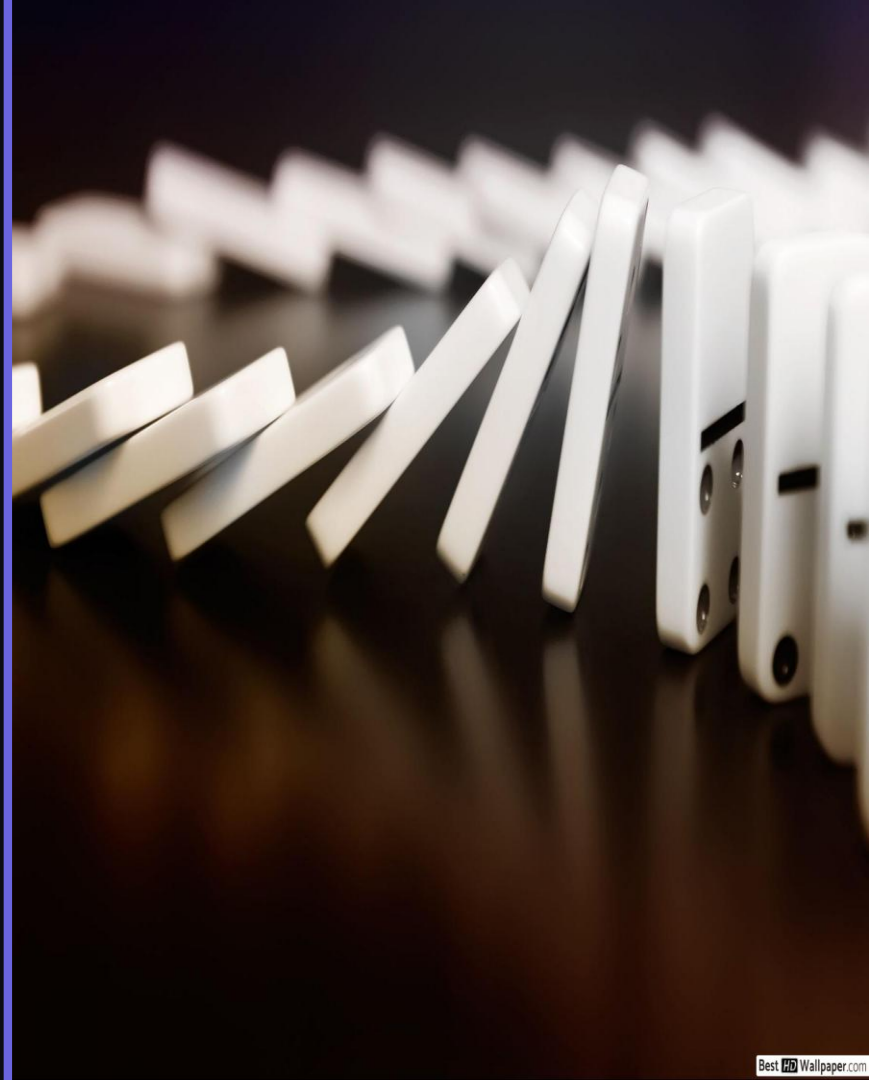
I CAN INFLUENCE

I CANNOT INFLUENCE

Change.
Accept.
Leave.

$$\mathbf{E + R = O}$$

Event + Response = Outcome



“

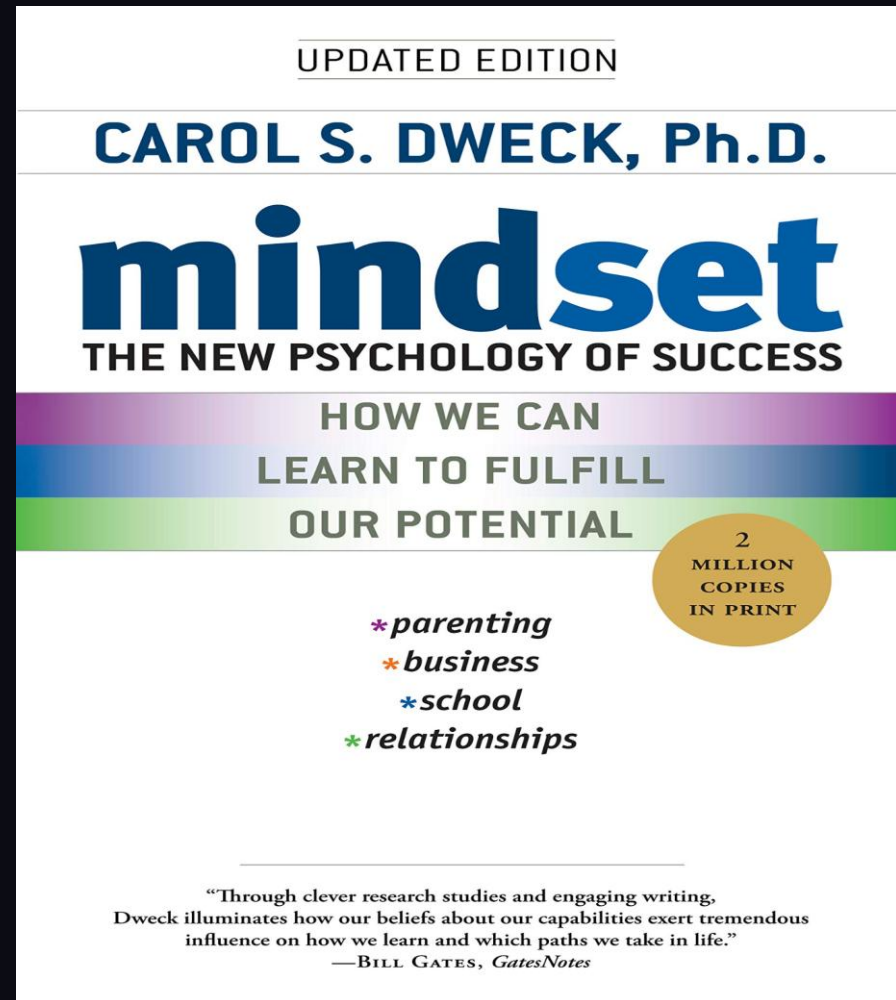
**Responsibility is something
that we can see and learn.**

Responsibility is a mental state.
We call it **leadership mindset.**



THE GROWTH MINDSET

How we can learn
to fulfill our potential



FIXED vs GROWTH MINDSET



With a FIXED mindset we tend to:

- Avoid taking on challenges
- Quit or give up easily
- Be highly self-critical
- See effort as pointless
- Disregard criticism
- Resent the success of others
- Criticize and judge others
- Argue for our limitations

With a GROWTH mindset we tend to:

- Embrace any challenge
- Never give up
- Practice self-compassion
- See effort as a journey
- Learn from all criticism
- Be inspired by others' success
- Help and nurture others
- Believe in possibilities

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Victim vs. Leader Context

VICTIM

Language: "I must", "we have to"

Silo mentality

- Disconnection from discussion
- Us vs. them alliances
- Values over facts

Self-pity ("Why me?")

False compromises, not speaking up

LEADER

Language: "It is important", "We will do our best"

"Do it together" mentality

- Stays connected to reality
- Seeks facts over gossip
- Asks clarifying questions

Focuses on own reactions & contribution

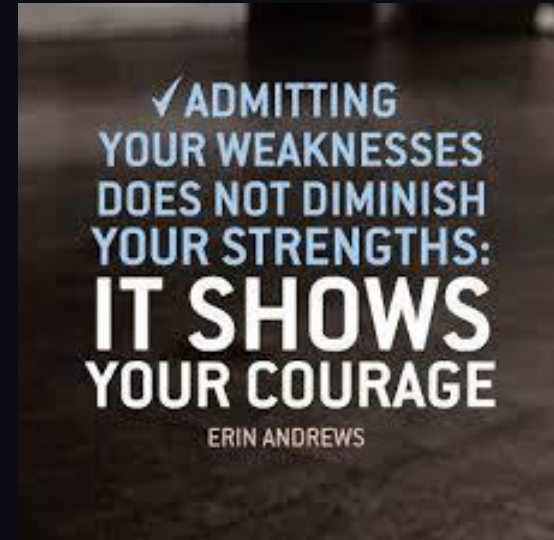
Open, direct, transparent

How can we cultivate growth mindset?



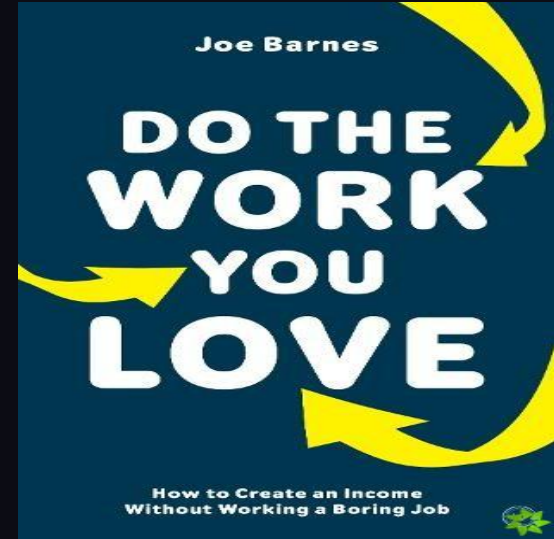
1. Acknowledge Your Weaknesses

You're not perfect. You have certain things that hold you back. There is nothing wrong with that. But if you want real change, you have to start here.



2. Do What Works for You

What's the best way to learn for you? Which exercises do you enjoy most? What works for others may not work for you. Don't mind if it means going slower.



3. Every Challenge Is an Opportunity

Challenges make us uncomfortable.

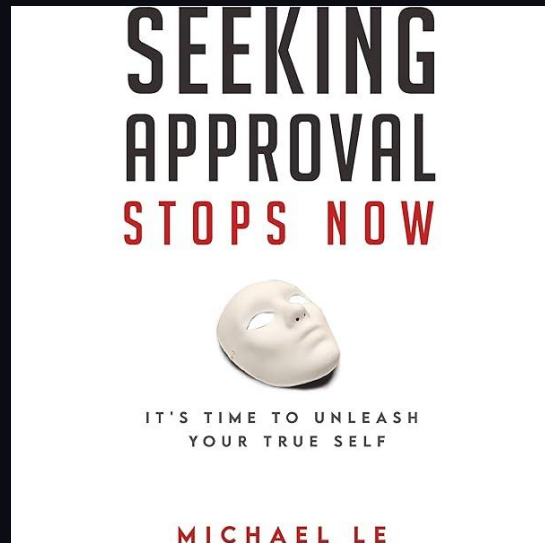
Discomfort pushes us to grow. When tasks get hard, don't give up. It's not how fast you achieve — it's the journey.



EVERY
NEGATIVE
EXPERIENCE,
EVERY
CHALLENGE, IS
AN
OPPORTUNITY
FOR ME TO
GROW

4. Stop Seeking Approval

Stop worrying about what other people think. Focus on your own progress. Don't waste energy on others' approval. The only approval you need is yours.



5

Focus on the Process, Not the Results



"Keeping your eye on the prize" stops you from learning in the moment. Take it slow. Celebrate small wins. In time, you'll go farther than you imagined.



FIXED MINDSET

- SOMETHING YOU'RE BORN WITH
- FIXED

- SOMETHING TO AVOID
- COULD REVEAL LACK OF SKILL
- TEND TO GIVE UP EASILY

- UNNECESSARY
- SOMETHING YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH

- GET DEFENSIVE
- TAKE IT PERSONALLY

- BLAME OTHERS
- GET DISCOURAGED

SKILLS

CHALLENGES

EFFECTIVE

FEEDBACK

SETBACKS

GROWTH MINDSET

- COME FROM HARD WORK.
- CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE

- SHOULD BE EMBRACED
- AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW.
- MORE RESISTANT

- ESSENTIAL
- A PATH TO MASTERY

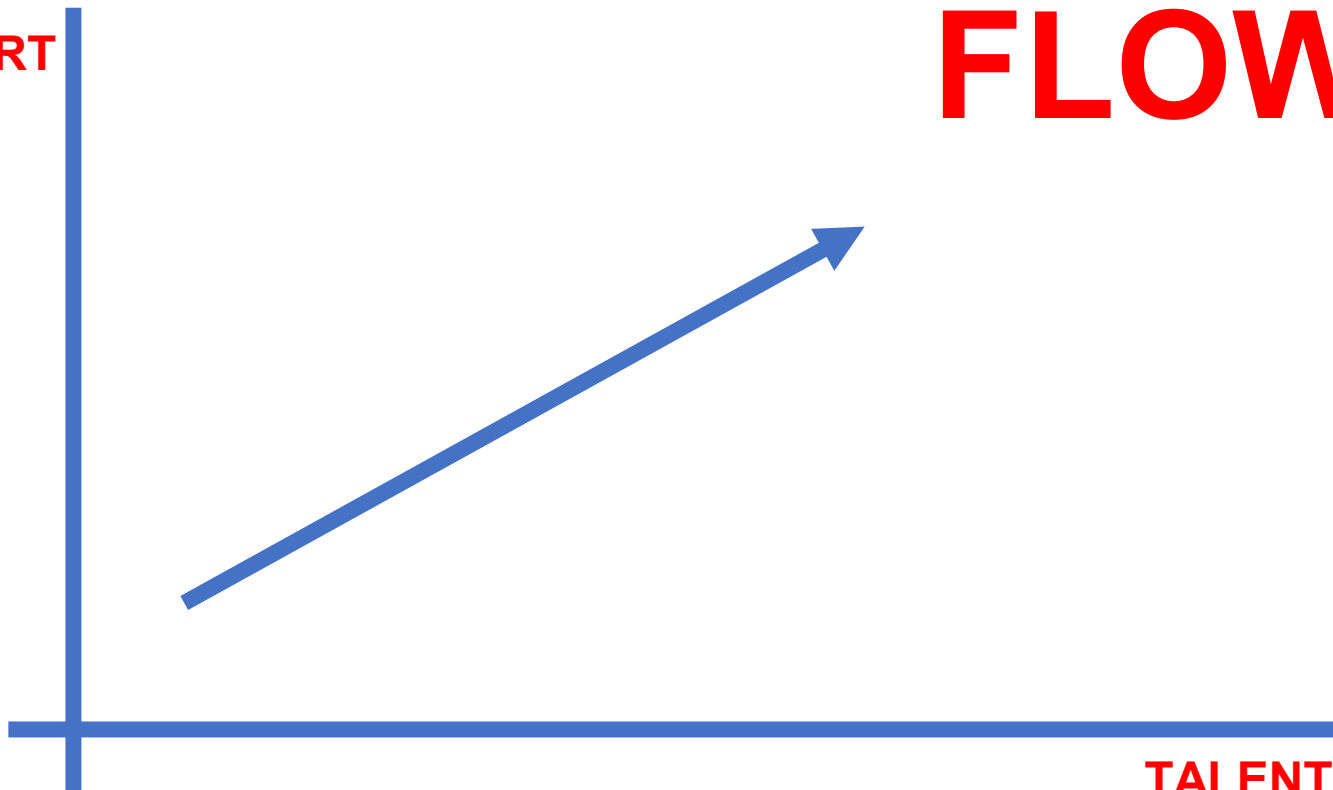
- USEFUL
- SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM
- IDENTIFY AREAS TO IMPROVE

- USE AS A WAKE-UP CALL TO WORK HARDER NEXT TIME.

FLOW

EFFORT

FLOW



TALENT

EFFORT + TALENT = FLOW

TEAM IN FLOW



TEAM IN FLOW

What does the Team in flow mean for you?





5 Functions of a Successful Team

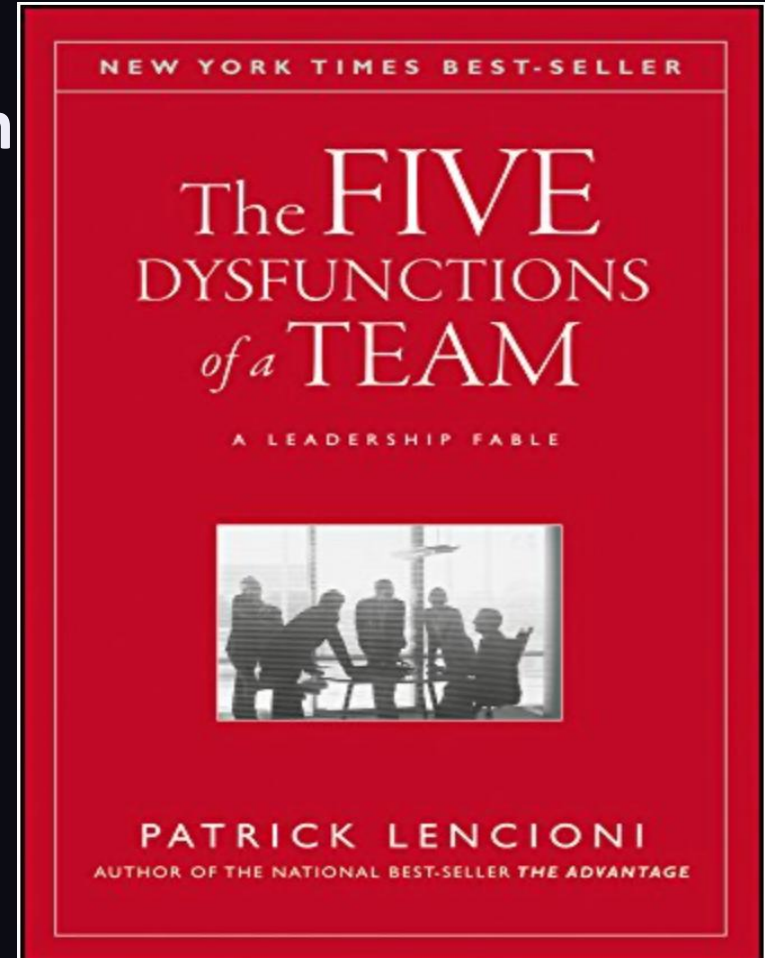
TRUST Foundation of everything

CONFLICT Productive disagreement

COMMITMENT Buy-in without consensus

ACCOUNTABILITY Peer pressure, not top-down

RESULTS Focus on collective outcomes



All teams are potentially dysfunctional!

Like it or not, all teams are potentially dysfunctional. This is inevitable because they are made up of fallible, imperfect human beings.

But the power of teamwork is immense. Fortunately, the causes of dysfunction are both identifiable and curable. Making a team functional requires levels of courage and discipline that many groups cannot seem to muster.

Effective team

Dysfunctional team

- Outstanding and recurring team results
- Highly motivated and engaged team

Inattention
to **Results**

- Poor performance and results
- High team turnover

- Poor performers are managed and held accountable
- Same standard apply to everyone

Avoidance of
Accountability

- Missed deadlines and key deliverables
- Poor performance is tolerated and creates environment of resentment

- Buy in and alignment on common objectives
- Clear direction and priorities
- Highly engaged team members

Lack of
Commitment

- Ambiguous direction and priorities
- Revisit discussion again and again
- Absenteeism

- Confront problems and issues quickly
- Develop practical solutions
- Get input from team members, minimal politics

Fear of
Conflict

- Go around problems
- Do not confront tough issues or behaviours
- Lack of transparency drives confusion

Safe environment to speak up
Team members help each other
Leverage strengths for the team

Lack of
Trust

- Hesitate to ask for help
- Conceal weakness
- Dread meetings and avoid team members

Not all stakeholders deserve equal attention.

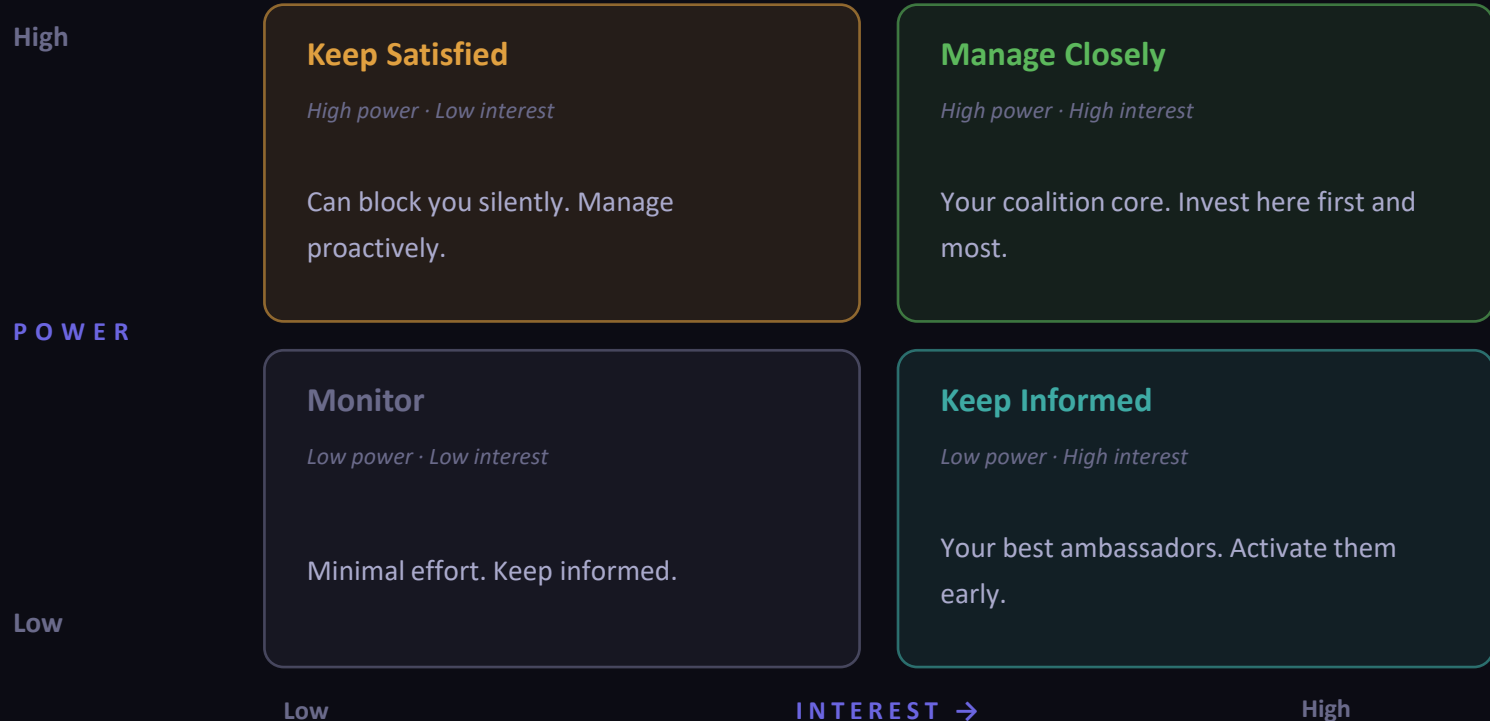


Exercise (5 min): Name 5 stakeholders on your current initiative. Place them in the matrix.
Who's getting the wrong amount of attention?



Inspired by the work of
THOMAS W. MENDELOW
Author of *Stakeholder Mapping*
and the Power / Interest Matrix

Not all stakeholders deserve equal attention.



TRUST



TRUST

“

The first job of a leader — at work or at home — is to inspire trust. It's to bring out the best in people by entrusting them with meaningful stewardship.

— Stephen M.R. Covey

“

TRUST IS A **FRAGILE** THING. EASY TO BREAK, EASY TO LOSE AND ONE OF THE **HARDEST** THINGS TO EVER GET BACK.

—
UNKNOWN



Trust is built slowly but lost quickly

Thinking about a company you trust,
how slow or fast did you build trust
with them?



Thinking about a time you lost trust
in a company, how slow or fast did
you lose trust in them?



Trust is not a feeling. It's your operating license.

Without trust, nothing above can hold.
With trust, everything below can accelerate.



LENCIONI
Vulnerability-based trust

"I can admit I don't know. I was wrong. I need help." Without this foundation, every layer above collapses.



EDMONDSON
Psychological safety

People stay silent not because they don't care — because speaking up feels risky. Your job: make engagement safer than silence.



COVEY
Trust is an economic variable

Low trust = everything slows, costs more, needs more oversight. In matrix orgs, trust compounds — or depletes — faster than anywhere else.



COVEY:
The 13 Behaviors of High-Trust Leaders



BUILDING TRUST
Get deposit accounts

- 1. Talk straight
- 2. Demonstrate respect
- 3. Create transparency
- 4. Right wrongs



EXTENDING TRUST
Make deposits in others

- 5. Show loyalty
- 6. Deliver results
- 7. Get better
- 8. Confront reality



RENEWING TRUST
Keep accounts in balance

- 9. Clarify expectations
- 10. Practice accountability
- 11. Listen first
- 12. Keep commitments
- 13. Extend trust



TRUST IS A FORCE MULTIPLIER.
It reduces friction, increases speed, and unlocks the full potential of your team.



MORE OPENNESS
Better conversations



MORE ALIGNMENT
Fewer missteps



MORE SPEED
Less bureaucracy



BETTER RESULTS
Sustainable impact

How to create trust?

Give new insights and offer freedom

Make yourself equal and listen attentively

Be successful and share that success

Provide clarity and be reliable

Be firm, show courage and daring

Know your natural place and have a sense of the past

Resistance is not stubbornness. It's neurology.

S

Status

Feeling less capable or respected.
Standardizing MY process = you know better than me.

C

Certainty

Uncertainty activates the same threat response as physical danger.
Be explicit about what WILL stay the same.

A

Autonomy

Loss of perceived control.
Centralization is inherently an autonomy threat.
Give meaningful choices.

R

Relatedness

If you're perceived as HQ vs us, you're already fighting uphill.
Relationship before transaction.

F

Fairness

Unfairness = neural circuits of disgust. Make the process transparent. Show the data.

Diagnostic: Before your next difficult conversation — which SCARF domain is most at risk for that specific person? Design your approach around reducing that threat first.

the fearless organization

Creating **Psychological Safety** in the
Workplace for Learning,
Innovation, and Growth

Amy C. Edmondson

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

WILEY



Trust is not a feeling. It's your operating license.



LENCIONI

Vulnerability-based trust — "I can admit I don't know. I was wrong. I need help."

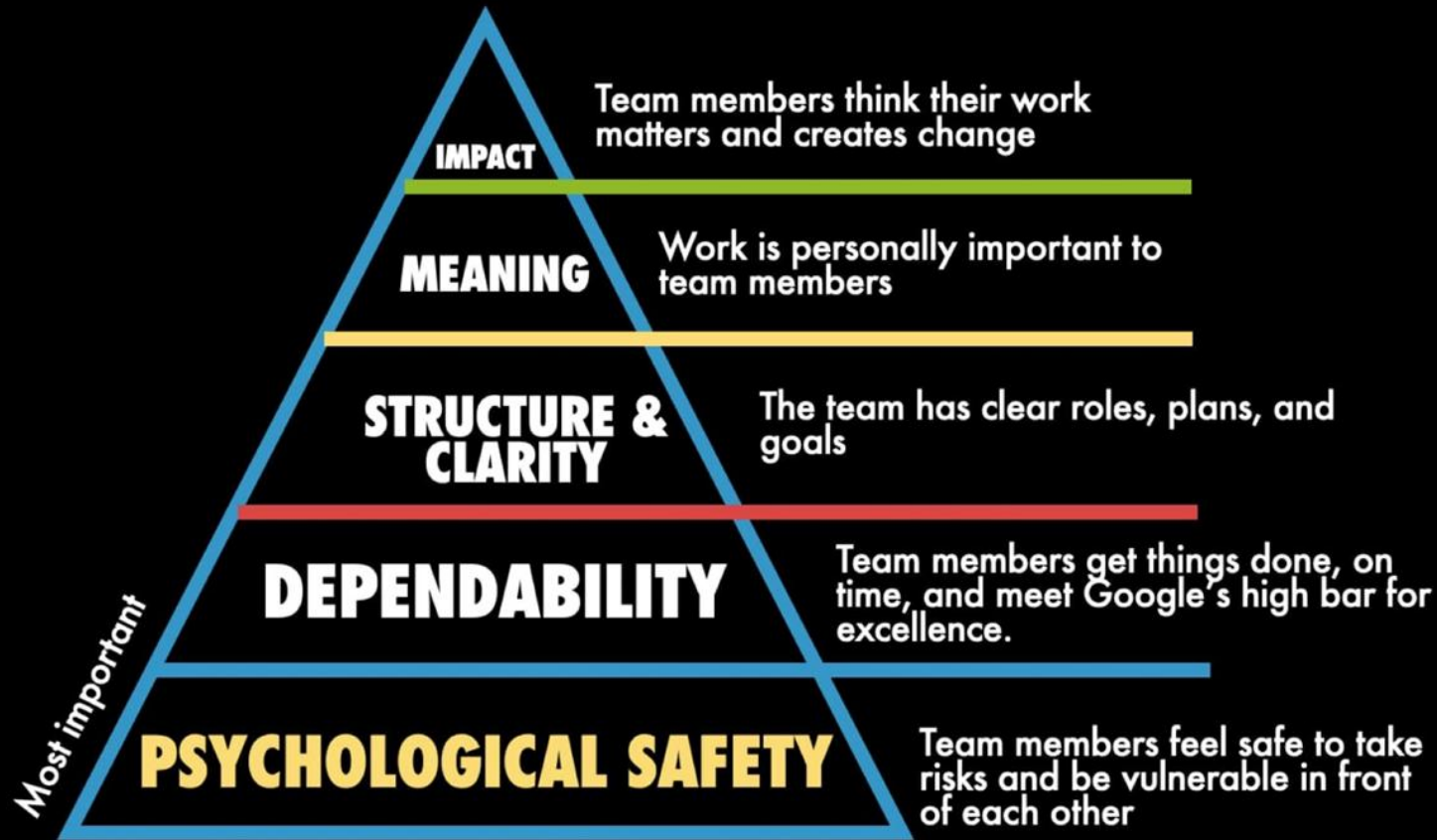
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EFFECTIVE GOOGLE TEAMS HAVE FIVE DYNAMICS





HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY?

- Feeling safe to share your true opinions (without playing politics)
- Raise concerns, address risks — speak up even if not agreeing with majority
- Acting without expecting negative consequences
- Trust that I will not be fired back
- Feeling safe to make mistakes and take risks
- Good facilitation resulting in safe feeling that I won't hurt or be hurt



HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY?

Risking socially

Speaking up

Daring to ask

Expressing worries

Making mistakes



**Constructive feedback
is a way to speak up.**



WHY DO WE STRUGGLE TO BE OPEN WHEN GIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK?



WHY DO WE STRUGGLE?

We do not want to harm our relationships

We are afraid of consequences

We crave peace and harmony



FISHBOWL EXERCISE

HOW IT WORKS

Each participant gives feedback to every team member.
One person at a time. ~1 min positive, then improvement.

PREPARATION

Prepare positive & improvement feedback on every person.
Be factual & non-judgmental. Use specific examples from last few months.
If you have no specific evidence — don't make anything up.



TIPS ON GIVING FEEDBACK

- Share observations of specific examples — avoid judgment or blame
- Be open — feedback based on what I see, feel, perceive
- Listen deeply — verify with questions
- Be detached from ego — be ready to be wrong
- Offer feedback as a gift — if necessary ask for permission
- Find a private place — never feedback in public



TIPS ON GIVING FEEDBACK

- Listen deeply without interrupting — treat the information as a gift
- Turn the upset into a set up — take a pause before reacting
- Probe for understanding — ask for clarification
- Acknowledge the other person's point of view — doesn't mean you agree
- Thank him or her — will maintain the line of communication
- Don't be afraid to ask for feedback proactively



Before you leave this room

**Who is the one person
you've been approaching
with the wrong tool —
and what would you do
differently tomorrow?**

One name. One move. This week.



THANK YOU

BRATISLAVA · 23. 6. 2026

